



Eagle 6 Sends

Team Eagle,

I hope each of you have had a safe Memorial Day Weekend spent with family And/ or friends. This morning, some BDE HQ's teammates are dedicating their running of a local Huntsville 5/10K Race to the memory of local fallen heroes. Annie and I will run for SSG Joshua Rath who hailed from nearby Decatur, AL. Josh (23) gave his life during Operation Enduring Freedom on January 8, 2009 when he and SPC Keith Essary (20), of Dyersberg, TN, and three civilians were killed when a suicide bomber detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) in an open bazaar in Afghanistan that wounded over 20 civilians.

We may have the honor to meet some Gold Star Family members, including Josh's mother, brother, and sister. Local writer Kari Hawkins quoted Josh's mother, Darlene Rath, who said, "Every so often there's something to look forward to, there's a ceremony or a tribute that reminds us how special Josh was. That makes it easier." She went on to say, "He wasn't all Army, he was a person, besides being a Soldier. He was such a neat guy. Every once in a while, I get stopped by other kids who say they joined up, that Josh was their inspiration. They saw the honor that Josh got. They know he died for a worthy cause. They know that serving is about giving yourself for something bigger than yourself, to a higher purpose. Josh gave his life in everything he did. He spent his life making sure other people were OK."

Josh's family remembers him every day. Whether a birthday, a young man smiling, someone telling a joke, or a Memorial Day Event. I ask that each of us take a moment to honor not only our fallen warriors, but those who survived them and persevered through heartbreak and life's struggles associated with loss of a loved one.

I'm honored to serve alongside each of you and proud of what you do for our Nation.

VR,
Eagle 6

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